

I am extremely disturbed by the recent proposal by Michael Powell to eliminate the cross-ownership ban on media within the a market. The concentration of ever fewer media voices is an exceptionally disturbing trend in our society. As someone who lives in New York City, and who studies and teaches about the media, it is incredible to me that Powell and others on the FCC could be so callous about the importance of maintaining a diversity of voices and viewpoints in the news. The media are not toasters, as one of your colleagues declared so disingenuously in the past. I don't want Rupert Murdoch's biased, simplistic, pro-corporate, and bullying outlook to determine the news I get about the world. Murdoch certainly has a right to own a media outlet, but our government, and the FCC in particular, have an affirmative responsibility to ensure that he does not own EVERY media outlet in my market. If you don't ensure it, who will? This is not really about Murdoch, but about the danger of any individual or group with a determination to control all the news and ideas in a market. The current diversity of outlets in New York does NOT justify allowing his or anyone else's domination of a local media market. What is to discourage his continuing to absorb more of the outlets here? This is very dangerous for our democracy. Your proposal reveals the emptiness of the concept of a "free marketplace of ideas" when it is not backed up by the willingness of regulators to protect it. I urge you not only to throw out Powell's proposal, but in recognition of the dangers of the trend toward concentration, to reestablish the earlier restraints on cross ownership that have been eliminated already.

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